IFAR reports

Volume 18, Number 10
October 1997

and The Art Loss Register

Gainsborough's Ardent Admirer: Barker of Bath

New York Recovery — Old Master Drawings

Much-traveled Rembrandt drawing recovered in New York after stops in Bremen and Baku. See p. 4.

IFARreports
incorporating *Stolen Art Alert*

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A Gainsborough Imitator: Thomas Barker of Bath

The prospect of IFAR's examining two Gainsborough paintings from a midwestern collection was a happy one for me. The first work, a portrait of *Captain Charles Phipps* turned out to be a copy of a known portrait by Gainsborough, which for years hung at Parham Park in West Sussex; the other, the topic of this article, depicts a rugged rural landscape, resembling others Gainsborough did of the terrain around the city of Bath where he worked in mid-career before moving to London in 1774. The artist, born in Sudbury, Suffolk in 1727, worked there and later in Ipswich during his early years. He developed into an expert draughtsman and watercolorist and was an artist who experimented in many mediums. Although he became an elegant portrait painter of great renown, Gainsborough's first love was landscape, and he was the founder of that great tradition in English painting.

The picture under discussion (fig. 1), depicts a rugged country landscape with a small green hill at left foreground and a steep rocky mountain at right with massive boulders crowned with foliage. A dirt path, embedded with deep grooves left from passing wagons, moves diagonally from the foreground to the right and then turns to disappear at left behind the hill. A horse-drawn cart may be seen emerging as it rounds the curve. A cluster of leafy trees is silhouetted against a sky aglow from the setting sun. Two men are conversing while seated on the trunk of a fallen tree to the right of center foreground.

The painting, long identified with Thomas Gainsborough, was from the collection of Lady Butler of Brighton, England. However, this fact could not be verified as there was no auction record of this work in the London sales of Lady Butler's collection. Furthermore, this composition was not included in the Frick Art Reference Library's photo archives for Gainsborough, nor was it reproduced in the major reference material for Gainsborough, which included *The Landscape Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough* (1982), and *Gainsborough Paintings and Drawings* (1975), both by John Hayes, the noted authority on the artist who retired recently from the National Portrait Gallery in London.

After a telephone call to the gallery, I discovered that Mr. Hayes is no longer involved in giving his expert opinion on paintings attributed to Gainsborough, and I was referred instead to Hugh Belsey, the curator of Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, Suffolk, who has taken over this responsibility. After discussing the landscape with Mr. Belsey, I arranged to send him photographs of the work for his consideration. In his response, he wrote that "in my opinion, the landscape is by Thomas Barker of Bath. It is very similar in subject and style to the canvas of Hampton Rocks (Victoria Art Gallery, Bath), a view Barker frequently painted" (fig.2). Mr. Belsey referred me to "the best publication on this artist," the Victoria Art Gallery's 1986 catalogue, *The Barkers of Bath.*

With this vital information on a possible artist, I returned to the Frick Art Reference Library and the library at the Metropolitan Museum to research the works of Thomas Barker of Bath (1767-1847). Although not the household name that Gainsborough is, he is an accomplished artist in his own right. There were a substantial number of pictures by him in the archives at the Frick, and his works are in many major collections, such as The National Gallery, London, The British Museum, Eton College, The Philadelphia Museum of Art and The Wadsworth Atheneum. In the catalogue of the exhibition cited by Mr. Belsey, *The Barkers of Bath*, by Philippa Bishop, the author cites an essay by Sir Edward Harrington written in 1793, where he describes Barker as "extremely modest and never wounds invidiously any painter's character, but speaks honourably of everyone who deserves it. His fine genius is tempered by sound judgement; of a gently, placid affable temper; of the most delicate manners." By contrast, a portrait of him in the catalogue shows a handsome, self-confident man with an authoritative, aristocratic bearing.

Thomas Barker, who worked for most of his life in Bath, was a self-taught painter and a talented imitator of other well known artists such as Van Dyck and Gainsborough. As the more accomplished artist among a family of painters, he was called "Barker of Bath." A wealthy Bath patron, Charles Spackman, enabled Thomas to receive an education, and he used his influence to promote the young artist through local exhibitions, which proved very successful. Harrington wrote also of "the phenomenon of the young prodigy, still in his early twenties, who was astonishing the art world not only of Bath but also of London with a prolific outflow of most mature paintings" (Bishop, p. 14).

Bishop observed that "the memory of the years Gainsborough had spent in Bath, from 1759-1774, was still fresh in people's minds" and his paintings were in many private collections in that city including Spackman's (p. 13). Gainsborough's landscape style served as an inspiration to Thomas Barker and this was "reinforced by the presence of the picturesque scenery round Bath which had also in its turn stimulated Gainsborough" (p. 13). As Bishop explained, Barker's landscape style and subject matter was so intertwined with Gainsborough's views of Bath that "a number of Barker's early works went for many years under the label of Gainsborough until properly identified through later connoisseurship" (p. 13).

Hampton Rocks (fig 2) illustrates an area nearby that Barker often painted. In the catalogue description for this landscape, the American painter, Benjamin West who lived in London, commented on the attraction of Bath for painters: "take Bath and twenty miles round it and there is not in the world anything superior to it. Rocks of the finest forms for a painter that he had ever seen, large square forms." As mentioned by Mr. Belsey earlier, the geometric shapes of these large boulders in the *Hampton Rocks* painting and in the picture under scrutiny, are very similar as are the hilly terrain and winding roads. In addition, both pictures, and others by Barker, illustrate the particular character of Barker's feathery leaves silhouetted against the backlighting of a setting sun.

Fig. 1. *Landscape*, 25 x 30 inches, previously attributed to Thomas Gainsborough.

Fig. 2. *Hampton Rocks - Morning*, 29 1/4 x 37 1/2 inches, by Thomas Barker of Bath. (Photo courtesy of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath)

Although the picture under examination is not by Thomas Gainsborough, as originally hoped, it is gratifying to be able to identify its probable origins. The picture seems to fit comfortably, both compositionally and stylistically, into Barker's oeuvre. As cited earlier by Philippa Bishop, the artist's early works were often confused with Gainsborough's, and as the work in question has been in a private collection for many years, it has until now escaped the notice of modern scholarship.

Virgilia H. Pancoast
Consultant, Authentication Service

U. S. Customs Recovers Old Master Drawings

Works Missing from Bremen Since World War II Were Stolen from Baku Museum in 1993

Masatsugu Koga, a Japanese citizen aged 60, was indicted September 17 on charges of possession, concealment, and sale in New York City of twelve drawings by old masters. The artists included Rembrandt, Albrecht Dürer, Annibale Carracci, and Jacob van Ruisdael. A press release from the U. S. Attorney's office estimated the value of the drawings at $10 million. Eight of the drawings were identified by a curator from the Bremen Kunsthalle as having been part of the inventory there before World War II.

Records show that the Bremen Kunstverein, a group whose collection was housed in the Bremen Kunsthalle, moved 50 paintings, 1,715 drawings, and some 3,000 prints to Schloss Karnzow for safekeeping in anticipation of bombing which devastated the city. At war's end, this area fell under Soviet domination, and the castle fell prey to looting by the Red Army. One of these Soviet soldiers, Viktor Baldin, later became a museum director in Moscow and startled the art world in 1989 by announcing that he had saved 362 of the Bremen old master drawings and kept them safely. He now intended to return them. News of the drawings' survival and imminent return created great excitement in Bremen, but it was premature. The drawings were shown at the Hermitage in 1992 but have yet to leave the territory of the Russian Federation.

Around July 1993, the Baku (Azerbaijan) Museum suffered a theft which was reported through Interpol some two years later. Many Russian prints and drawings were taken, but in the report were a number of old master drawings with the Bremen Kunstverein seal. The Interpol report subsequently gave both museums as theft victim. (See *IFARreports*, Vol. 16, No. 10, October 1995)

How many of the other drawings and works of art stored at Schloss Karnzow may surface in the future is an intriguing question. Many more works may be in private hands in the former Soviet Union and could some day find their way to the markets of Europe, Great Britain, or the United States.

How and when the Bremen drawings reached Baku is still unclear, although some connection with the KGB has been mentioned. It is also charged that Mr. Koga had a Russian associate who has not been identified. Perhaps this person will prove to be a link between Baku and Tokyo, where, according to the press release, Mr. Koga first approached the German Consulate offering to sell the drawings in April, 1997. Maxine S. Pfeffer, the Assistant United States Attorney in charge of the case, told IFAR that the investigation is continuing.

As with many high quality works taken in high profile thefts, it must have been difficult to sell drawings with a museum's seal on them. For someone in possession of stolen art of this calibre, one possible path to choose is back to the original owner to broker a sale. This might well be considered ransom, and a theft victim offered his property back would do well to call in law enforcement. This scenario of recovery has held true, with variations, in many cases including Edvard

Rembrandt, Harmenz van Rijn (Dutch, 1606-69). *Standing Woman with Raised Hands*. Sepia ink partly highlighted in white. 20.5 x 18.5 cm. *Recovered.*

Jacob Salomonsz. van Ruisdael (Dutch, 1630-81). *Landscape*. Sepia on paper. 9.3 x 15.0 cm. *Recovered in a Manhattan hotel.*

Munch's "The Scream," and Pieter Brueghel the Elder's "Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery" stolen from the Courtauld Gallery in London.

The investigation into Mr. Koga's dealings with the drawings was conducted by the U. S. Customs Service under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York, Andrew J. Garlichs. The complaint was signed by Senior Special Agent Bonnie Goldblatt, who was actively involved in the investigation into the attempted sale of the drawings. This recovery was a major success for the U.S. Customs art program.

According to the complaint, Mr. Koga traveled to Germany, met with representatives of the Bremen Museum, and later agreed to sell them the drawings at an unnamed hotel in midtown Manhattan.

Mr. Koga was arraigned on September 18 and released on personal recognizance after securing a bond on his $250,000 bail with a payment of $5,000. Ms. Pfeffer told IFAR he relinquished his passport and that his travel is restricted to New York City, at least until a pre-trial conference now set for October 20 takes place. The foregoing account of events in the government's complaint are accusations which Mr. Koga may contest. An attempt to reach Mr. Koga's attorney was futile. Like all defendants, the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Constance Lowenthal

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1923 – 1997

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and Museum Man

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Missing Art Alert

Missing Objects

Inclusion of works in this list is based on information that each of the reported pieces is missing and its whereabouts unaccounted for. Listing does not necessarily imply theft or any illegality on the part of any person.

Fine Arts

Prints, Drawings

American, 18th Century

7 COPLEY, John Singleton (1738-1815). *Watson and the Shark.* Black and white chalk on grey-green. 30.5 x 35.6 cm. *N97.310.1. Litchfield, CT.

7

Stolen Art Alert

In cooperation with the Art Loss Register, the art community, insurance companies, police, the FBI, and Interpol

Stolen Objects

The stolen works in this publication are grouped under seven categories - Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, Antiquities, Ethnographic Objects, Asian Art, Islamic Art, and Miscellaneous Objects. Within the categories, they are further subdivided by object, type and school.

*Each listing includes a brief description of the work, the IFAR catalogue number, and the date and place of theft. An asterisk * before the catalogue number means that a photograph of the stolen work is available, though not necessarily included in this issue. Anyone wishing further information should contact the ALR.*

All items are registered in the database of the Art Loss Register, with its New York office at 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103 and a London office at 12 Grosvenor Place, SW1X 7HH.

Please note that the information contained in each catalogue entry is supplied by the owner and that IFAR does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of information.

Fine Arts

Paintings, Pastels, Mixed Media Works, Watercolors

American, 19th Century

652 GRAVES, Abbott Fuller (1859-1936).*The Organ Grinder*, 1894. Oil on canvas. 81.3 x 116.8 cm. Signed and dated l/r: Abbott Graves 1894. *N97.305.1. Sebastopol, CA. Jul. 11, '97.

653 WHISTLER, James Abbott McNeill (1834-1903). *Lagoon - Venice*, 1880. Watercolor. 11.4 x 13.9 cm. Signed on verso: "Whistler." A very spare depiction of a gondola in Venice with the shore on the horizon. On rough wove paper. *N97.292.1. New York, NY. Jul. 16, '97. *Reward.*

American, 20th Century

654 FINK, Aaron. *Portrait with Yellow Tie*, 1984. Acrylic on paper. 200.9 x 149.9 cm. A man wearing a beige hat and suit, white shirt and a bright yellow tie, against a dark ground. *N97.303.1. Long Island City, NY. Nov. 19,'99.

653

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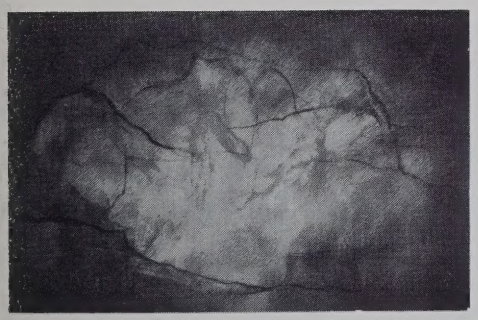
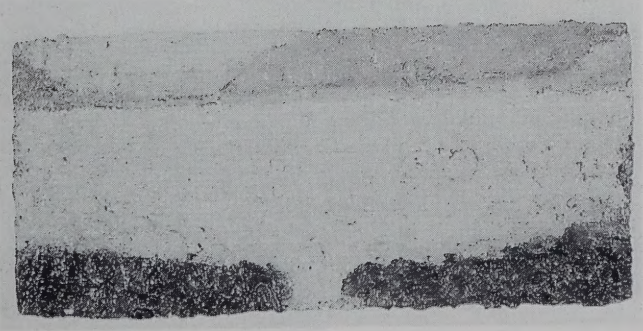
654

655 GRAY, Cleve. *Imaginary Landscape (Red)*, 1994. Acrylic on duck. 101.6 x 127.0 cm. *N97.307.1. Warren, CT. Feb. 12, '97.

656 LEES, John. *Study of Sleeman Pond in Rainy Weather*, 1984. Oil on masonite. 12.7 x 28.6 cm. Abstract composition with grey at the top resembling a shoreline with a hill at right, a large area in the center of a light color (the pond?) and two brown forms at the bottom (one at right and one at left) resembling a shoreline with a break in the center of water. Very roughly textured. *N97.298.1. New York, NY.



655



656

French, Century Unknown

657 RENARD, F. *Men Playing Cards.* Oil on canvas. 80.0 x 65.0 cm. *N97.236.5. Bucharest, Romania. Jul. 19, '95. Interpol Number: E-164/11-1996

Rumanian, 20th Century

658 DAMIAN, Horia (b. 1922). *Portrait of an Old Man.* Oil on canvas. 90.0 x 50.0 cm. *N97.236.2. Bucharest, Romania. Jul. 19, '95. Interpol Number: E-164/11-1996

657

Rumanian, Century Unknown

659 HETIA, Sava. *Reclining Woman.* Oil on panel. 25.0 x 35.0 cm. *N97.236.3. Bucharest, Romania. Jul. 19, '95. Interpol Number: E-164/11-1996

658

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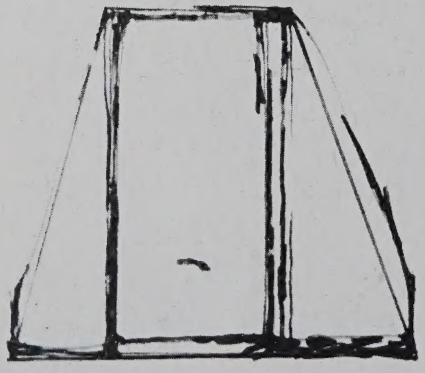
660 *Pygmalion and Galatea*. Oil on canvas. 85.0 x 69.0 cm. *N97.236.1. Bucharest, Romania. Jul. 19, '95. Interpol Number: E-164/11-1996

660



661

Prints, Drawings

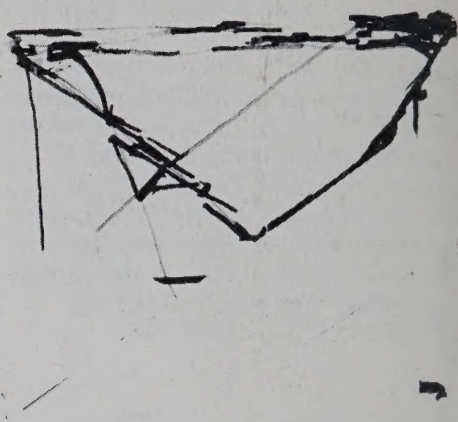
American, 20th Century

661 MARDEN, Brice (b. 1938). *Reporter's Notebook*, 1981. Ink on paper. 17.1 x 10.2 cm. Part of a notebook of 31 pages. Two Reporter's Notebooks of 31 pages each were published in facsimile in 1984. *N97.316.1. Munich, Germany. Jul. 26, '97.

662 MARDEN, Brice (b. 1938). *Reporter's Notebook*, 1981. Ink and masking tape on paper. 17.1 x 10.2 cm. Part of a notebook of 31 pages. Not included in the facsimile published in 1984. *N97.316.2. Munich, Germany. Jul. 26, '97.

French, 20th Century

663 CHAGALL, Marc (1887-1985). *Amoureux au bouquet des fleurs*, 1962. Ink wash and gouache on Japanese. Mulberry paper. 67.3 x 50.8 cm. Signed l/r: Marc Chagall. Numbered on verso: 58. In monochrome. *N97.319.1. San Francisco, CA. Jul. 3, '97.



662

663

Sculpture

American, 20th Century

664 BRADSHAW, Dove. *Nothing Series VI*, 1994. Gold. 5.7 x 4.4 cm. Cast hen's eggshell in 18k gold. Unsigned. N97.306.1. New York, NY. Nov. 1, '96.

European, 19th Century

665 KELETEY, T., Attr. to. *A Boy in Alpine Dress*, 1850. Bronze and ivory. 20.3 x 10.2 x 15.1 cm. Signed on the marble base: T. Keletey. On a rectangular marble base. *N97.301.1. New York, NY. Aug. 5, '97.

Unknown, 19th Century

666 *Angel with Lyre*. Terracotta. 76.2 x 152.4 cm. *N97.290.1. Shelter Island Heights, NY. Aug. 25, '97.

665

Decorative Arts

Ceramics, Pottery, Porcelain

Rumanian, Century Unknown

667 Vase. Porcelain. Ht. 90.0 cm. With silver leaves in relief. *N97.236.4. Bucharest, Romania. Jul. 19, '95. Interpol Number: E-164/11-1996

Clocks, Timepieces, Watches

Swiss, 20th Century

668 PATEK PHILIPPE & CO. Wrist watch. Reference No.: 3584/1. Movement No.: 121 2 728. Eighteen jewels with a 18kt white gold bracelet and blue face. *N97.294.1. Boca Raton, FL. Jun. 27, '97.

Miniatures

Unknown, 19th Century

669 *Portrait of a Woman*, 1850. Watercolor on ivory. 15.2 x 7.6 cm. Signed illegibly. Possibly Belgian. Framed and inscribed on the frame: "Marie de Brabrant." A young woman wearing a white jewel-encrusted turban, a high-necked robe, and a pearl and red gemstone necklace. *N97.315.1. Rehoboth Beach, DE. Sep. 7, '97. *Reward.*

666

667

669

Silver

American, 18th Century

670 ALSTYNE, Jeronimius. Pair of teaspoons, 1790. Silver. With pointed terminals, the front engraved with the initials "LSM" in contemporary script. Made in New York. *N97.299.3. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

American, 19th Century

671 KIRK AND SON, Samuel L. Set of ten dinner forks, 1830. Sterling. Each with four tines, the front engraved with the initials "JJP" in script with bright-cut engraving. *N97.299.4. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

672 McCONNELL, John. Pair of teaspoons, 1840. Sterling. Ht. 13.9 cm. In the "Fiddle" pattern, the terminals engraved with the initials "SJM" in contemporary script. Made in Richmond, Virginia. *N97.299.8. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

673 MITCHELL, William, Jr. Assembled pair of salt spoons, 1835. Sterling. In the "Old English" pattern with bright-cut engraved terminals and stems. Each with a reserve engraved with the initial "M" over the initials "HR" in block letters. One with repaired stem. *N97.299.9. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

674 MITCHELL, William, Jr. Set of seven teaspoons, 1835. Silver. W. 14.6 cm. In the "Fiddle" pattern. The terminals engraved with the initials "JRM" in contemporary script. Made in Richmond, Virginia. *N97.299.7. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

675 PETIT, Matthew, Attr. to. Set of eight dessert spoons, 1835. Silver. Eight missing out of set of twelve. With elongated "Fiddle" pattern terminals, engraved with the initials "MLM" in ornate contemporary script. Backs marked with four pseudo hallmarks. Made in New York. *N97.299.1. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

676 WHITE, William W. Four teaspoons, 1835. Sterling. Four missing from a set of eight. Each having an elongated "Fiddle" pattern terminal, the front engraved with the initials "JAMcC" in contemporary script. Made in New York. *N97.299.2. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

677 WOOD & HUGHES. Set of nine dinner forks, 1888. Sterling. Missing from a set of eleven. Each having a ridged tip to the terminal and engraved with the name "Preston" in contemporary script. Retailed by Nowland & Co., in Richmond, Virginia. *N97.299.5. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

American, 20th Century

678 WILLIAM B. DURGIN & CO. Set of five tablespoons, 1890. Sterling. The "Chrysanthemum" pattern, the reserve engraved with the initial "D" in Old English script. Length 8 3/4 in. Patented circa 1890. Retailed by Bailey, Banks and Biddle, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *N97.299.6. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

American, Century Unknown

679 WILLIAM H. CARY & COMPANY. Set of six teaspoons. Sterling. In the "Fiddle" pattern Each terminal engraved with the initials "SMR" in script. *N97.299.11. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

680 Set of eleven pastry forks. Sterling. In an unidentified pattern but similar to "Old Colony" by Gorham. Each terminal engraved with the initial "M" in script and retailed by Shreve & Company. *N97.299.10. Washington, DC. Jul. 30, '97.

Antiquities

Sculpture

Greek, 4th Century, BC

681 Stele of man and dog, c. 399 B.C. Marble. Ht. 123.0 cm. He wears a draped toga / classical style off the right shoulder and pulled up to his left hip, his left leg is sightly bent at the knee as he turns to face the dog which is standing on its hind legs with its paws balancing on the boy's thighs. The boy holds his hand down to the dog and in his other hand he holds a dove. The dog's head is now missing. Pediment above with damage. The stele has been repaired in several places. *L97.1586.1. Ramnous, Greece. Feb. 15, '97.

681

Greek, 4th-5th Century, BC

682 Female statue. Marble. Ht. 140.0 cm. Funeral statue of a standing young woman, her right leg is missing below the knee. In heavy classical dress slightly archaic in style with chiton and peplos. Her upper right arm is missing. There are traces of red on the right eye. *L97.1586.2. Ramnous, Greece. Feb. 15, '97.

Jewelry

Pre-Columbian, 6th Century

683 *Mayan Head*, c. 500 A.D. Jade. Ht. 4.5 cm. Classic period. Jade is emerald color with black striations. A full-round head of an idealized male, possibly a lord or corn deity, with an ovoid face with a long nose joining a sloping forehead, with a headdress surrounding the face. With drill holes for suspending it from a necklace or belt. *N97.296.1. Memphis, TN. Jul. 23, '97.

682

Asian Art

Jewelry

Indian, 19th Century

684 Thali (Marriage pendant). Gold and garnet. 76.2 x 76.2 cm. From Southern India. Circular with a rough surface, and with scrolls flanking a collet-set round garnet at top. *N97.295.1. New York, NY. May 16, '97.

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Photo by Louis Kimery. Copyright 1992

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